



Local transportation funding is critical to preserve county roads and bridges

Faced with massive unfunded needs for transit service, roadways and bridges, King County and its cities have jointly asked the legislature to authorize new local funding tools. The proposed funding package would enable King County Road Services to preserve 1,500 miles of roads that support more than 1 million vehicle trips every day, as well as vitally important bridges and culverts.

Funding would stabilize parts of the county road system

\$20 million per year could fund:

■ Pavement preservation (\$10 M)

Repavement of the highest-volume roads and chip sealing and road patching on other roads would cut down on potholes, extend the life of roadways, and provide smoother rides for motorists.

■ Bridge preservation (\$2 M)

Replacement of two short-span structures per year would reduce the county's inventory of deteriorating bridges. Replacement keeps roads open and eliminates the need for lengthy detours. Without new funding, 35 bridges are at risk of closing over the next 25 years, resulting in major travel inconvenience and delayed emergency response.

■ Stormwater protection improvements (\$3 M)

Activities such as ditch cleaning would reduce the threat of flooding to roads and nearby property while meeting new stormwater pollution control requirements.

■ Drainage preservation (\$3 M)

At-risk areas of the county's stormwater system would be targeted for repair or improvement. These improvements reduce local flooding and prevent road failures and washouts that can keep roads closed for weeks.

■ General maintenance on local streets (\$3 M)

Maintenance would include vegetation control, pothole repair and storm response, which includes activities such as plowing and sanding, response to urban and river flooding, and removal of downed trees after windstorms so power can be restored.

What is proposed?

- **1.5% local option vehicle renewal fee based on vehicle value**

King County would be authorized to impose this fee through a council vote or by a vote of the people. The fee would not apply to new vehicles or to commercial vehicles and trailers. The average car owner would pay \$50 to \$80 per year more for each vehicle owned.*

Forty percent of the revenue, or \$55 million, would go to cities and King County.

- **8¢ increase in the state gas tax - 35 percent distributed to cities and counties**

- **Increase in the vehicle fee that Transportation Benefit Districts can approve, from \$20 to \$40**

Total of all sources to the King County Roads Fund would be \$20 million annually

* Based on DOL average used passenger car value in King County of \$6,756 and net impact after eliminating the existing \$20 congestion reduction charge, federal tax deduction and new car purchase every fifth year.

Why is new funding needed for county roads?

King County Road Services takes care of about 1,500 miles of county roads and 180 bridges that carry more than 1 million trips per day, serving 250,000 residents of unincorporated areas—and thousands more who travel through them.

This critically important roadway system is aged and deteriorating and needs substantial investments. But the funding Road Services receives from local property tax, gas tax and grant funding has declined by one-third since 2009, and will continue to decline in the future.

Revenues that support county roads have fallen dramatically as the result of a 44 percent drop in property values in the rural and urban unincorporated areas of King County. The average unincorporated area homeowner will pay roughly \$90 less in 2013 for road services than in 2011.

Another factor is losses from annexations—without a corresponding drop in responsibility for roads, bridges, and culverts or the duty of keeping roads clear in the winter.

Road Services has taken many steps to address the problem:

- Reduced the division's budget by \$10 million since 2011, resulting in the loss of one-third of the workforce by 2013
- Implemented new efficiencies and realized savings from an internal reorganization
- Frozen employee COLAs
- Shifted focus from capacity improvements to safety needs, preservation and repair
- Developed the Strategic Plan for Road Services and a system to prioritize road services.

Despite these actions, the amount of funding available for the county road system in 2014 will be \$85 million, while the amount needed to stabilize the decline in 2014 is projected to be \$135 million, or a difference of \$50 million.

In the long term, more will be needed to fund the system at the optimal level, at which our roads would be preserved at the least cost.

